

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----089947 260424Z /14

P 260330Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3250

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 4387

EXDIS

NOFORN

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IR, AF, PK, UR

SUBJECT: THE SHAH'S VIEWS ON AFGHANISTAN

REF: A) TEHRAN 5358 (EXDIS) B) KABUL 4022 (NOTAL)

C) TEHRAN 3623

1. SUMMARY. NOTING THAT THE SHAH CONTINUES TO DISSEMINATE SERIOUS MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT AFGHANISTAN (PARA 5, REFTEL A), I RECOMMEND THAT AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN ATTEMPT TO REDIRECT HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY'S THINKING ON THIS POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE SHAH IS, AS USUAL, EXAGGERATING THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CURRENT SOVIET INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN (PARA 5, REFTEL A). THIS DISPARAGING LINE HAS BEEN FREQUENTLY USED BY IRANIAN AND PAKISTANI OFFICIALS -- AND THE
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AFGHANS REGARD IT AS AN IRRITATING SLANDER. THE "WILY" DAOUD REGIME CONTINUES TO MANAGE KABUL'S SENSITIVE AND TRICKY BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS LARGER NORTHERN NEIGHBOR IN A TRADITIONAL, TIME-PROVED AFGHAN FASHION WHICH CREDIBLY PRESERVES THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE DEGREES OF INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY. INDEED,

SOME OBSERVERS THINK DAOUD IS BETTER AT THIS GAME THAN FINALND'S URHO KEKKONEN.

3. AFGHANISTAN'S INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES ARE EFFECTIVE AT MONITORING, ISOLATING, AND NEUTRALIZING THE -- AS YET -- SMALL, POORLY ORGANIZED LEFTIST ELEMENTS IN THIS COUNTRY. FOR THEIR PART, THE SOVIETS APPEAR TO BE CAREFUL TO AVOID DISTURBING THEIR MORE IMMEDIATE BILATERAL INTERESTS HERE AND ARE CAREFUL NOT TO GIVE THE DAOUD REGIME CAUSE TO BECOME ALARMED OVER COMMUNIST SUBVERSION.

4. THE SHAH IS CORRECT, HOWEVER, IN ADDRESSING HIS ATTENTION TO POSSIBLE REGIONAL SECURITY PROBLEMS OF A POST-DAOUD PERIOD (WHICH COULD COME UPON THIS COUNTRY QUICKLY). BECAUSE DAOUD, LIKE MOST STRONG-MAN-TYPE LEADERS, HAS NOT YET ESTABLISHED AN ORDERLY SUCCESSION, A CHAOTIC SCRAMBLE FOR POWER COULD FOLLOW HIS DEPARTURE -- A SITUATION WHICH PRO-SOVIET ELEMENTS, AS WELL AS OTHERS, MIGHT FIND TEMPTING AND PROMISING. FREE-WORLD FRIENDS OF AFGHANISTAN -- THE SHAH INCLUDED -- SHOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT THE POTENTIAL LEADERSHIP OF THIS SOCIETY IS IDENTIFIED, STRENGTHENED, AND ENCOURAGED IN ORDER TO BEST PREPARE THEM AS STABILIZING FORCES FOR THIS FUTURE
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CHALLENGE. (IN THIS CONNECTION, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IT IS NOT TRUE THAT "ALL" AFGHAN MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN THE USSR. SOME HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE U.S. -- AND BEING TRAINED IN THE USSR DOES NOT NECESSARILY MAKE AN AFGHAN PRO-SOVIET. INDEED, SOME BECOME QUITE THE OPPOSITE.)

5. THE IRANIANS COULD HELP BY CEASING TO TREAT THE AFGHANS IN A PATRONIZING MANNER AS BUMPKIN COUNTRY COUSINS -- AND BY BECOMING MORE ACTIVE AND FORTHCOMING IN THEIR AID PROGRAMS FOR THIS COUNTRY. WE DO NOT AGREE THAT THE SHAH HAS BEEN "OVERLY GENEROUS" WITH KABUL -- NOR WOULD THE AFGHANS ACKNOWLEDGE THAT HE HAS GIVEN THEM "ALL THEY WANT." THIS NIGGARDLY IRANIAN ATTITUDE IS REFLECTED IN THE DISAPPOINTING OUTCOME OF THE RECENTLY-CONCLUDED FOURTH SESSION OF THE JOINT IRANIAN-AFGHAN COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION -- WHICH LABORED WITH MIGHTY RHETORIC AND BROUGHT FORTH A MOUSE IN TERMS OF MEASURABLE ASSISTANCE FOR AFGHANISTAN

(REFTEL B).FOR EXAMPLE, THIS EMBASSY THINKS
IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT THE IRANIANS
BECOME MORE FIRMLY COMMITTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT
OF ADEQUATE ROAD AND RAIL LINKS BETWEEN AFGHANIS-
TAN'S POPULATION CENTERS AND IRAN'S PORTS. BY
SO PROVIDING THIS LAND-LOCKED NATION WITH ANOTHER
MAJOR ALTERNATIVE TO THE EXISTING SOVIET AND
PAKISTANI TRANSIT ROUTES, IRAN WOULD INCREASE
AFGHANISTAN'S POTENTIAL FOR FLEXIBILITY IN
FOREGIN AFFAIRS AND INCREASE KABUL'S ECONOMIC
AND POLITICAL CONTACTS WITH A NEIGHBOR WITH WHICH
IT NOW HAS REMARKABLY LITTLE INTERCOURSE. IRAN
WOULD FIND THIS A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT FOR STABILITY
AND SECURITY ON ITS EASTERN FRONTIER -- AND, EVENT-
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UALLY, PERHAPS OF SOME ECONOMIC VALUE AS WELL.

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRKORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KABUL 4387

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6. AS FOR THE SHAH'S COMPLAINT ABOUT KABUL'S ALLEGED
AGITATION IN BALUCHISTAN, THIS EMBASSY HAS NEVER NOTED
ANY AFGHAN INVOLVEMENT IN THAT REGION WHICH HAS BEEN

DIRECTED IN ANY WAY AGAINST IRAN. ALTHOUGH BALUCHISTAN APPEARS AS "SOUTHERN PUSHTUNISTAN" ON THOSE AFGHAN MAPS WHICH HAVE BEEN USED IN CONNECTION WITH DAOUD'S EARLIER PROMOTION OF THE "PUSHTUNISTAN" DISPUTE WITH PAKISTAN, THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN HAS CAREFULLY AVOIDED ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PAKISTANI-IRANIAN ARGUMENTS CONCERNING THE WESTERN REACHES OF THIS REGION. NOW THAT AFGHANISTAN'S RAPPROCHEMENT WITH PAKISTAN CONTINUES TO REMAIN VIABLE, KABUL HAS PLACED THE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE ON A BACK BURNER -- ALTHOUGH IN A RECENT INTERVIEW WITH A WESTERN JOURNALIST (REFTEL C), DAOUD WAS REPORTED TO HAVE EXPRESSED THE AFGHANS' CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE RIGHTS OF THEIR "PUSHTUN AND BALUCH BROTHERS". IN OUR VIEW, THIS COMMENT WAS IN NO WAY CONFIDENTIAL

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DIRECTED AGAINST IRAN, HOWEVER.

7. RECOMMENDATION: SUBJECT OF COURSE TO HIS AND THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS, I BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN WERE TO UTILIZE AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO REBUT, AS APPROPRIATE, THE SHAH'S MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT AFGHANISTAN -- AND ENCOURAGE HIM TO PURSUE A MORE PRODUCTIVE ROLE IN INCREASING AFGHANISTAN'S TIES WITH IRAN. AT THE LEAST, THE SHAH SHOULD BE DISABUSED OF ANY NOTION THAT THE U.S. AGREES WITH HIS EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN. ELIOT

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